

From: ElisabethLehigh  
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Comment: August 21, 2004

Bureau of Land Management Alaska State Office  
222 West 7th Avenue  
Anchorage, AK 99513-7599

Dear Sirs:

1

Please accept these comments on the proposed amendment to the oil and gas leasing plan for the northeastern National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. I am especially concerned about the impact of the Bureau of Land Management's proposal on the area around Teshekpuk Lake, which is one of the most unique and important wetlands in the entire circumpolar Arctic.

002  
Wildlife

Habitat fragmentation is one of the most disruptive and destructive human activities leading to the endangerment and extinction of wild animal populations.

3

I urge you to adopt Alternative A, the No Action Alternative because it maintains protection for the entire Teshekpuk Lake Surface Protection Area. This incredible area provides critical habitat for molting geese from three countries and a vitally important caribou herd that Alaska Natives depend upon for their subsistence. The BLM's proposal to reduce protection in this area to only 213,000 acres -- less than five percent of the planning area -- is completely inadequate for the geese, which scientific evidence shows are highly sensitive to disturbance, and does little to protect the caribou that give birth to their calves in this area.

4

Eighty-seven percent of the northeastern Reserve is already open to oil and gas companies for leasing. There is no science indicating that the sensitive areas now closed to leasing can be opened safely. It would be a mistake to risk the internationally significant ecological resources of Teshekpuk Lake for short-term supply of energy, especially when we know that the United States cannot drill its way to energy independence.

5

I urge you to choose Alternative A, the No Action Alternative, in the northeastern Reserve to protect its incredible wildlife, wilderness, and subsistence values for future generations.

Sincerely,

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Attached: None